

## BRIEFS

### ARK. BAPTISTS MAKE HISTORY

**HOT SPRINGS, Ar. (BP)** — Arkansas Baptists have elected as second vice president Steven Bell, pastor of Otter Creek Community Church in Little Rock, who is believed to be the first African American officer in the history of the state Baptist convention, which is aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention. The Arkansas Baptist State Convention action follows by one year the election of the first African American to statewide office in the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Larry Young, pastor of Spangle Banner Church in Pace, is serving a second term this year as second vice-president.

### LUTHERANS DROP BOY SCOUTS PACT

**ST. LOUIS (BP)** — The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, the second largest Lutheran denomination in America, has severed its official relationship with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) over BSA's decision to allow openly homosexual Scout leaders. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two groups was dissolved Dec. 1. "We are now being told that the LGBT agenda, even with the most recent change, won't affect the content of Scouting or the BSA experience, but we do not believe that will be the case," said synod president Matthew Harrison in a news release.

### FOUNDING PROPERTY CONDEMNED IN GA.

**AUGUSTA, Ga. (BP)** — The church property in Augusta, Ga., with ties to the 1845 birth of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has been condemned by city officials. The structure served as the home of First Church, Augusta, from 1902-1975. While the condemned building is not actually the one where the SBC was founded, the previous building in which the SBC was founded was at the same location. First Church, Augusta, which relocated in 1975, is no longer affiliated with the SBC.

## Church booms under missionaries

### Filipino youth key to growth

**PHILIPPINES (BP)** — When someone shouted, "Your uncle is coming," everyone in the Philippine village knew the code meant "run and hide." Neighbors disappeared into small concrete homes until International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries Dave and Ivette Daggett had come and gone.

A few, however, including 13-year-old Berlyn Familiaran, stuck around to hear what the foreigners had to say. The curious teenager planned only to sit in and listen during the Saturday Bible studies, nothing more — but even that angered her parents and the host of other family members living in her poor community.

That's because they are among an unreached Filipino people group considered predominantly Catholic but steeped in idol worship and animism, Dave Daggett explained. Most are insular and fearful of anything new that threatens religious traditions, he added.

"We felt like that was such a difficult community, if we could ever see anything prosper there, surely it would prosper anywhere in the city so we just kept going back," he said.

Berlyn kept going back, too. Something about this husband and wife team from Florida was different to her. Berlyn couldn't believe they had learned her language and wanted to teach her worship songs in her language.

The foreigners knew about the drugs and violence in her community and about her dad, who was in and out of jail. They encouraged her and they kept praying for her family, Berlyn said.

Berlyn was baptized just a little more than a year after meeting the Daggetts. "The joy was really in my heart," she said. "I can feel the presence of the Lord, even when we



### GLOBAL MISSIONS OFFERING

### BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS

AND BECAUSE YOU GIVE, THE HELP  
CHURCHES SEND MISSIONARIES TO THE  
BILLIONS WHO HAVE YET TO HEAR

### MINISTRY PLANNING

International Mission Board missionary Dave Daggett (left) meets with Rodel Manalo at his home to discuss Rodel's ministry with the Deaf Filipino community. Rodel is one of Daggett's primary local partners in reaching the Deaf in the Philippines. The work of Daggett and his wife Ivette is supported by gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Cooperative Program. (IMB photo)

have problems in our family. I want to be the testimony to my community."

As Berlyn continued sharing the Gospel with her family and inviting them to Bible studies with the Daggetts, the walls of resistance appeared to crumble. Dave, Ivette, and Berlyn started a church.

"Some of the parents have come to Christ and been baptized, but most don't take the leadership challenge," Dave said. "It's the younger ones who have stepped up in leadership. They share the Gospel with their friends and are going with us to evangelize in other areas."

Eleven years ago when he and Ivette hosted a Vacation Bible School and met Berlyn, Dave had no idea that God would use the teenager who said she came only for the free snacks or that other children

and teenagers from her family would trust in Jesus, become leaders in the village church, help start a church in another village, and disciple young leaders in that church.

They're now praying to start a third-generation church. "We're just doing what we believe is the heart of God. Somehow you sense His heart and when you go that direction, He just provides in supernatural ways," Dave said.

Equipping local believers for ministry was always the plan, so Dave and Ivette disciple those who step up despite their youth. They even disciple deaf youth and adults, and God has used those believers to start several deaf churches.

Working primarily with leaders who are young and

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Right on time

The intellectual elitists in our society are at it again, telling us that the war on Christmas is a figment of Christians' fetid imagination. Is that true? To quote the late Alfred Hitchcock, I submit the following for your consideration.

"The thing about religious holidays is that they aren't about how good and happy life is, far from it. Religious holidays are about how bad life was, or how good the way distant future or even the afterlife is going to be. The 'Joy to the World' is going to come at the end times," wrote noted atheist entertainer Penn Jillette in his book, *Every Day is an Atheist Holiday* (Blue Rider Press).

Jillette recently served as the grand marshal for this year's Hollywood Christmas parade. Even taking into consideration that it's Hollywood, how ironic is that?

"As our country is becoming increasingly xenophobic and Islamophobic, it's important this holiday season to consider our friends and neighbors who aren't Christian. That's not declaring a war. That's trying to make peace," wrote Miranda Cannon in the *Daily Nebraskan*, where her biography describes her as a junior English and political science major at the University of Nebraska who works for the O'Malley presidential campaign.

The implication in Cannon's piece, of course, is that Christians should give up every observation of the birth of Christ so as to avoid offending nonbelievers. It may have belonged to Christians for, oh, 2,000 years, but not in our enlightened, post-Christian American society.

Cannon's comments are as silly as expecting her university to give up their mascot (Cornhuskers) and their school colors (scarlet and cream) because supporters of other schools might be offended during football season.

"If you plan on having a Christmas party at the University of Tennessee, be sure to leave the Baby Jesus and Santa Claus at home," wrote Todd Starnes of FoxNews.com. "The taxpayer-funded university's Office for



Diversity and Inclusion recently released an 'unofficial' edict calling for the campus to host holiday parties that do not emphasize religion or culture."

Here's what diversity and inclusion at Christmas mean at the school, as quoted by Starnes from the letter distributed on official University of Tennessee stationery:

- Holiday cards should be non-denominational.
- Decorations should not be specific to any religion or culture.
- "Refreshment selection should be general, not specific to any religion or culture." Yes, that's a verbatim quote.
- Holiday parties should not play games with religious or cultural themes. Listed as examples are Dreidel, a Jewish game from Europe usually played during Hanukkah, and Secret Santa, a gift exchange game.

This could go on and on with countless more incidents like these, but space dictates this commentary must come to an end. Draw your own conclusions, however. Is there a war on Christmas? Without a doubt there is, just like the wars by Christian haters in this country on so many other symbols of our faith — and even our core beliefs — that have been trashed.

Thankfully, our Lord and Savior did not call us to fight every Satan-inspired attempt to downplay the importance of Christ at this time of the year. He called on us to take the saving knowledge of the Gospel message to the uttermost parts of the world, every day of the year (Matt. 28:18-20). If we can just manage to stay focused on that, He will do the rest.

## Why should we go?

Why should every Christian say to God, "I will pray however You want me to pray, give whatever You want me to give, and go wherever and whenever You want me to go"? Why should each person say, "I will go to my neighbor, and I will go to another nation?"

Consider four reasons based upon Isaiah 6:1-13.

■ **We have an incomprehensibly glorious God.** Our God reigns. In Isaiah's vision, the Lord is surrounded by angelic attendants (seraphs). The angels are all-consumed and ablaze with the worship of God. Myriads of heavenly beings circle the throne of God, shouting and singing praises to God without ceasing. They're doing that now! The beauty of a sunrise, the resounding echo of thunder, and the vastness of a mountain range all give us a glimpse of the glory of our Creator.

■ **We are a sinfully lost people.** We might think that we aren't so bad, but we have no clue as to the seriousness of our own sin. Man-centered perspectives view sin as a small offense to be excused, not warranting full and infinite punishment — but the magnitude of sin isn't determined by how small or large we perceive it. The magnitude of sin is determined by the majesty of the One who is sinned against.

At its core, sin is a personal affront to God, and it leads to the most important question in all the universe: How can sinful people stand before an incomprehensibly great God and not receive infinite punishment?

■ **We have a scandalously merciful Savior.** By His great grace and in His great plan, God has made a way for us to avoid the punishment we deserve. God wills to show us mercy, so much so that He chose to provide the atonement for our sin. This is a scandal of infinitely significant proportions because through the sacrifice of His Son on behalf of sinners, God has made a way for our salvation!

■ **We have an indescribably urgent mission.** The grace of God isn't designed for casual acceptance. It compels us to abandon plans, dreams, possessions, priorities, treasures, and pleasures in this world. Our King is worthy of so much more than nominal, casual, cultural Christianity. He is worthy of absolute submission to His person and absolute surrender to His purpose: Declaring His glory and



### Guest opinion with David Platt

His Gospel to the ends of the earth, particularly to the unreached.

The unreached are people who have never received the Good News of the Gospel and currently don't have access to it. This includes more than 2.8 billion people around the world. Why must we urgently pursue them? Why must we take the command of God to go to all people more seriously? Why must we stop giving only our spare time and leftover resources to this task?

The reason is because their partial knowledge of God is enough to condemn them to hell (Romans 1:18-32). Every unreached person in the world has some knowledge of God, whether it's a man in an African jungle, a woman in a remote Asian village, or a nomad in a vast desert. Even if they haven't heard the Gospel, they have seen evidence of God. Every person in the world stands guilty of sin before God, which is why they need to hear the Good News of the Gospel.

This means there are more than 2.8 billion people in the world today who have enough knowledge of God to show them that He is incomprehensibly glorious — but that's all they have. They are sinfully lost without the rest of the Gospel. We must take it to them.

We must go to the unreached because the Gospel of God is powerful enough to save them from hell and admit them to heaven, to one day be within the presence of the high and holy God. Ultimately, we go with urgency to the unreached because the glory of God is good enough to satisfy them forever. There is coming a day when we will see His face and join in the chorus that surrounds Him, proclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy!"

This is why we must say, without condition and regardless of cost, "Here we are, Lord; send us."

Platt is president of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Va. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for length, style, and clarity.

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### BAPTISTS

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# Business as missions opening eyes of students

**FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)** — An entrepreneur with a fruitful career using business as a platform for the Gospel played a key role in a mission trip last fall to Central Asia by nine students from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth.

Although Business as Missions had previously been offered at the Southwestern, for the first time the course included a mission trip to Central Asia.

Dean Sieberhagen, Southwestern's associate professor of missions and Islamic studies, said the trip provided a practical component to the course by allowing students to go beyond classroom theory to see firsthand a unique avenue for reaching people in and through the marketplace.

Business as missions offers "the opportunity to overcome the sacred/secular divide," Sieberhagen said. "When you get up on

Monday and go wherever you are going, that is missions. You are living out your faith in whatever you do."

He added, "When you say 'missions,' people think of what we call 'traditional missions.' However, in many countries you cannot do that. There is this idea that there are levels of society with which the traditional missionary does not have an audience. If you go to a country as an employee or entrepreneur, you have a natural audience with those people in a day-to-day way."

In addition to working with the entrepreneur, students on the trip also assisted people in startup businesses. In the mornings and early afternoons, they divided into groups to either scout for potential shop locations or do market research including visiting businesses, talking to store owners,

and gathering information about their target markets and customers. Later, afternoons and evenings were spent prayer walking and touring historical sites.

In one-on-one time with the entrepreneur, the students learned practical steps to use their talents and skills in business as missions. Master of divinity student Dolores Adamick (not her real name), who received her undergraduate degree in marketing and is considering a business model for her future mission work, recounted, "I met the Lord in college, and the initial joy of salvation came from knowing that God loved me and showed grace upon me who was lost, but also that He wanted to show grace upon other people who are lost. He really gave me a heart for the lost, specifically the Muslim people group."

Through the Sept. 26-Oct. 2 trip, Adamick said, God used the entrepreneur to affirm her calling to international missions and also revealed new possibilities for using her marketing background and skills.

"[The entrepreneur] really invested in our lives and spent time to find God's vision for us," Adamick said. "He wanted us to learn what it is to struggle through business and missions but to also find joy in the place that God has called us. We all left this trip amazed and encouraged because we didn't even know this was something God had for us."

Adamick said it is important to remember that business as missions does not replace traditional forms of mission work but rather supplements them. "Business-as-missions profes-

sionals can't do it alone," she said. "We need church planters all over this world."

Master of arts student Nicole Sharp (not her real name) also is considering this model of missions. Although she doesn't have any business background, she saw it as a practical way to spread the Gospel wherever she might find herself in ministry.

"I think it is important for people to know that the business-as-missions ministry model can be an everyday life model," Sharp said. "As believers, we are called to be a light no matter where we are. The business field is one of the biggest mission fields out there."

Whether you are an entrepreneur or an employee, you can have a Kingdom plan. You can be intentional wherever you are and in whatever you do."

## Work in Southeast Asia challenging, but bearing fruit

**SOUTHEAST ASIA (BP)** — Mark Harrison's focus appeared to be solely on the family he had come to see. It wasn't the North Carolina pastor's first visit to the home in a remote Southeast Asian village tucked among lush, green mountains. He had visited the family during other trips to the villages of the "T" people.

Although the youngest sister in the family and her husband had become Christians, her parents and three sisters never seemed interested in the Gospel.

Harrison, missions pastor at Old Town Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., hadn't planned to stop. Tired from traveling all day, he was headed to the rickety wooden boat that would take him back across the river but when a local believer called him, Harrison knew he needed to go with him to visit the family again.

Early on, Harrison and Old Town Church had decided to focus their strategy to reach the people group on encouraging and discipling local believers to share the Gospel. "They [local believers] know the language. They know the culture. They understand the ins and outs of everyday life. They have access to the people."

After more than a dozen trips to the people group's villages in the past five years, Harrison and Old Town Church members have seen some "T" people turn from Buddhism, believe in Jesus, and then lead others to faith in Jesus.

Yet believers are still few among this unreached people group that remains staunchly Buddhist. Less than one percent

of the nearly 1.5 million people believe in Jesus.

"The 'T' people are deeply rooted in their animistic and Buddhist background," Harrison said. They're very attracted to the Gospel, he noted, but hesitant to let go of their heritage.

That's the story at the home of the four sisters. As Harrison scooted closer to help the oldest sister tie a knot on the bracelet she had made — a beaded bracelet telling the story of creation and salvation — he asked if she'd ever thought about trusting in Jesus.

"She was very interested in the Gospel, but could not say yes to Jesus. She wanted to choose both," Harrison said. "She wanted all the benefits of following Jesus, and yet maintain her religion."

The woman is afraid a family and friends will reject her if she leaves Buddhism. "You are so close to experiencing the love of the Living God," Harrison told her. "I pray you will have courage to say 'yes' to Jesus, no matter the cost."

Ever since they committed to sharing the Gospel among the people group, Harrison and Old Town Church have prayed for them to have courage to leave Buddhism.

When the church began praying about engaging an unreached, unengaged people group, Southeast Asia missionaries such as William and Mallory Ritz (not their real names) guided them to the "T" people, helped them learn about the people group, and schooled them in Southeast Asian culture.

"We help build partnerships between our Southern Baptist



**SHARING GOSPEL** — Mark Harrison, missions pastor at Old Town Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., uses an opportunity in a local market in Southeast Asia to share the Gospel. He explains to the market's proprietors how God created everything in the world, including the fish and the food they're selling at the market. (IMB photo)

churches in America with our national partners and existing field personnel," William said.

William and Mallory are able to serve in Southeast Asia because Southern Baptist churches give through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

"We want to help our churches in America develop strategies toward reaching, equipping and training," he said.

Old Town Church's strategy to partner with local believers is working. Before stopping at the sisters' home, Harrison visited a young believer named Met (not his real name), a motorcycle repairman whom Old Town Church had helped disciple.

"As our teams go to his village we always stop by his house to encourage him and nurture him along in his faith," Harrison said.

This day, Met had invited a former Buddhist monk to his bamboo hut to meet Harrison.

When the former monk came to have his bike repaired, Met had shared the Gospel and led him to faith in Jesus.

"It's exciting to see that a man from the 'T' people background, through the influence of another 'T' person, made a commitment of his life to Christ. This is incredible evidence of the activity of God," Harrison said.

As "T" believers continue helping Harrison and Old Town Church learn about their people and culture, Harrison and Old Town in turn help them learn to share their faith.

Before visiting Met, Harrison began his busy day with Thura (not his real name), a local believer with whom he had spent time a few months earlier, teaching him to share the Gospel. Thura shares the Gospel even though his father, the village leader and a Buddhist, doesn't want him to do so.

Thura asked Harrison to teach and pray with Nanda (not his real name), who had believed

in Jesus after Thura shared the Gospel with him. The men sat at an outside restaurant until the glares became too distracting. The foreigner and the Christian conversation were not welcome, so they crossed the dirt road to Nanda's home.

On the porch, Nanda's young daughter swung her legs back and forth in her plastic chair, gently resting her head on her dad's shoulder as he told how he turned from Buddhism to trust in Jesus.

As he talked, answered prayers unfolded before Harrison.

"The seed of the Gospel has taken root in their hearts and is now growing," Harrison said. He could leave with the confidence that the new family of faith established there would continue to grow and sow the seed of the Gospel among their neighbors.

Find resources for churches at [imb.org](http://imb.org) to learn more about and promote the Lottie Moon offering.

The terms, "coach" and "coaching," have been in vogue for some time now in almost every realm of life, not just in sports but business, church, politics, and almost every profession. There are people who coach other people and folks who look to the coach for help. Through the years they've been called mentors and managers, leaders and instructors, but for the present moment coaching seems to be the hot button emphasis in a lot of areas.

Coaching in whatever area, but especially in sports, is not an easy task. You must have a winning strategy for the game and inspire the people who are going to be playing — but then, especially in high school, the level of athletic ability may range from very little to top notch some years and that is what you have with which to work.

Recently I was talking with a man who had been a high school coach for over a decade. We happened to be sitting in the stands watching a game as he began to talk about his days as a coach. He was neither bragging nor complaining, but he was talking about how difficult it was as he dealt with his own players, the players on the other team, the calls, the missed calls of a referee, even the folks in the stands, and sometimes the folks who hired you to coach.

Two things about which he talked that really captured my attention regarding the difficulties of being a coach: First, he said there are a lot of times during a game where there is a big rush of blood to your head. That's pretty clear and often seen in many athletic coaches. Secondly, in a thoughtful, meditative way he said, "A lot of times it's hard to be a Christian and be in that profession." He wasn't just talking about the language that sometimes is used by a coach, but even more the attitude shown by the coach to everyone around him.



## The Coach

As you begin to think things that are not who you really are and express things that you wish you had not, it is tough being a coach. He was in coaching for several years and he's now been out for several years and I don't think that he will be going back. I think that every area of life — every profession, every calling, whether you're coaching or being coached — has its challenges and even more so has its good days and its bad days. There are days when all of us have the blood-rushes-to-your-head moments, and for most of us there are those experiences that test our Christian commitment to speech, attitude, and actions.

Our conversation then drifted into the challenge which leaders, coaches, mentors, and encouragers frequently encounter, and that is how you get people motivated, inspired, encouraged, and challenged to do their best. Not everyone is a self-starter. That's a fact. Not everyone aspires to have initiative and not only achieve excellence, but go beyond. They may not be loafers in life but they don't want to overdo it, either. They kind of drift along and

all the coaches around them, whether they be called parents or preachers or teachers or athletic encouragers, they know that they could do better and should do better and would do better if they would just listen to the coach and catch a spark of inspiration and somehow move on and move up. It may happen for a moment and the encourager turns his/her back and it's over. I think that is the most discouraging moment of all for the coach, wherever they fit into life.

Jesus was never referred to as a coach but this master teacher, miracle worker, challenger of men and encourager of women, must have looked at those who responded to Him for a moment or a day or a week and then drifted away and felt the frustration of, "How can I help them be all they can be?" Can you imagine that group in which he invested the most time and the most instruction and the most example-setting — his disciples — when they faltered and failed and were faithless and frustrated, and when just those twelve trying to help them as a Kingdom team be game changers? At times, they let Him down.

Pastors or shepherds in the middle of God's flock come to moments like that more often than anyone would know. It may be after repeated counseling sessions or a series of sermons or encouraging some group in the church or the body together to move forward in the things of God to do great things for God and they look with a questioning stare and choose not to do anything. They probably at times think, "Well, if the coach would give us a rousing speech — a good sermon — then everybody would get on board." The problem is like the football team on Friday night in the middle of the season. Some of the players have a serious letdown and people wonder what is wrong with the coach. Well, in truth, he may have a letdown too but he is in a position where everyone thinks he is the mastermind, the clear thinker, the person with the right word of motivation, the one who has the strategy, and the one who because of his training and his skillfulness will bring a word that will bring success to all. Occasionally it happens. Often it doesn't.

Now, you and I need to understand that every one of us in the economy in the work of God are both coaches and those being coached. It's true. There are people who look to you, and you need to encourage and bless and help them to focus on all that God would have them to be. There are moments when you need to listen and look and let your heart be opened and your life be ready to respond and work hard and do your job regardless of what anybody else is doing or playing or saying. When it comes to serving the Lord, commit your life to be coached by the Master and in turn you be a coach and encourager to those around you.

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## First Person: Time to make a difference for missions

By Randy C. Davis  
Correspondent

The world is in chaos. Wars rage. Terror perpetrated by evil people has nations on edge. Millions are displaced, and the debate over refugee resettlement is burning white hot. The world's spiritual soil is as fertile as ever and cries out for a broad spreading of Gospel seeds. This world desperately needs Jesus.

Southern Baptists have historically rallied to the moment and responded to the call of Christ to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. However, I believe we as Southern Baptists stand at a crossroads. Either our action will be the substance that validates our calling, or it will



DAVIS

be hollow "Great Commission" rhetoric with no action, exposing our Christianity as superficial.

In other words, it is time to put our money where our mouth is. This year, David Platt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board (IMB), made the difficult decision to downsize IMB personnel by 600 to 800 people, many of them missionaries being recalled from the field.

One of the reasons for doing so was to financially restructure the organization to be a better steward of the resources IMB receives from Southern Baptists. Another is to stretch the dollars it does receive, and that's a variable that needs to increase.

It is currently the time of year when we remember Charlotte Digges "Lottie" Moon, writing from China in 1887, called Southern Baptists to "consecrate a portion from abounding riches and scant poverty to send forth the good tidings of great joy into all the earth," linking

generous giving to the advance of the Good News.

This call for financial support eventually became known as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. It is a vital lifeline to supporting our global missions effort, but it is not our only missions-giving opportunity.

Ninety years ago, Southern Baptists established Cooperative Program giving to even more comprehensively sow Gospel seeds locally, nationally, and globally. They recognized we would not sustain an effort to reach the ends of the earth if we failed to reach Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, as Jesus phrased it in Acts 1:8.

David Platt has often referenced the "SBC Ecosystem" as the interwoven fabric of Southern Baptist life that advances the Gospel at all levels of an Acts 1:8 strategy. Example: A young person led to Christ in a local church is disciplined and introduced to missions through a Baptist Collegiate Ministry, eventually graduates from seminary,

and goes on to serve cross-culturally through the IMB. The Cooperative Program is the beating heart that gives life to our missions ecosystem.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is obviously vital, and as Southern Baptists we must respond to Lottie's question through this offering when she asked, "Why should we not... do something that will prove that we are really in earnest in claiming to be followers of Him who, though He was rich, for our sake became poor?" We must also respond to that question on an ongoing basis.

Unfortunately, too many don't understand the Cooperative Program or don't value its importance — or both. Did you know that if churches on average increased their Cooperative Program giving just two percent, we could replenish the IMB with the 800 lost missionaries? If churches would return to 10% Cooperative Program giving — the norm just a few decades ago and one of the key objectives that Tennessee

Baptists have affirmed for the next nine years — we could add 2,000 additional missionaries while also accomplishing Great Commission work on the local, state, national, and international levels.

The Great Commission is more than just "going," and we appear superficial if we never get beyond the rhetoric of inspiring people toward a general vision. We must dig down and feed our roots of stewardship and giving.

When generosity fuels our Gospel sowing, we will affirmatively answer Lottie Moon's call, "Why should we not... prove that we are really in earnest in claiming to be followers of Him who, though He was rich, for our sake became poor?"

More importantly, we will answer Jesus' call.

Davis is executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention in Brentwood, Tn. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.



# 'Evangelical' definition released by NAE, LifeWay

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and LifeWay Research have released an evangelical beliefs research definition for accurate and consistent use among researchers.

NAE initiated development of the research definition more than two years ago. In partnership with LifeWay Research, the definition was crafted, reviewed, and tested for validity.

Numerous surveys seek to capture the opinions and practices of evangelicals in the United States. From tithing behaviors to political inclinations, evangelicals are regularly identified in research and polls. Because researchers use different tools to identify evangelicals, results vary from poll to poll. Even the estimated number of U.S. evangelicals ranges from 23% - 35% of American adults.

"Evangelicals have been misunderstood and categorized incorrectly so often, and much of that is due to inconsistent identification in research," said NAE president Leith Anderson. "Now we have a way to measure evangelical belief with confidence."

The NAE/LifeWay Research definition includes four statements to which respondents would strongly agree in order to be categorized as evangelical:

■ "The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe."

■ "It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior."

■ "Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin."

■ "Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation."

The NAE board of directors adopted the evangelical beliefs research definition at its Oct. 15 meeting.

## The NAE/LifeWay Research definition of evangelical belief includes four statements to which respondents must strongly agree:

- The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe.
- It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.
- Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.

NAE.net

LifeWayResearch.com

Researchers typically have used two methods to identify evangelicals: self-identification and denominational affiliation. In some research polls, however, evangelicals are identified more by political demographics than religious characteristics. Though the African American Protestant population is overwhelmingly evangelical in theology and orientation, for example, it is often separated out of polls seeking to identify the political preferences of evangelicals.

"Evangelicals are people of faith and should be defined by their beliefs, not by their politics or race," Anderson said.

NAE and LifeWay Research sought to identify people who hold evangelical beliefs regardless of affiliation or behavior. The framework provides a valid third method to researchers who

typically define evangelicals by self-identification or denominational membership.

"We're not saying these are the only evangelicals, but we are saying this will define someone as having evangelical belief," said Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research, a division of Nashville-based LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

With input from a diverse group of sociologists, theologians, and evangelical leaders, LifeWay Research designed and tested 17 questions that were eventually narrowed to a set of four. The statements closely mirror historian David Bebbington's classic four-point definition of evangelicalism, but with an emphasis on belief rather than behavior, said Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research.

"Affiliation and behavior can be measured in addition to evangelical beliefs, but this is a tool for researchers measuring the beliefs that evangelicals — as determined by the NAE — believe best define the movement and, just as Native Americans might best define who is a Native American, we think evangelicals can best define evangelicals," Stetzer said.

LifeWay Research confirmed the statements are statistically valid, reliable, and form a valid scale, testing them in online and phone surveys.

People who strongly agree with one statement tend to strongly agree with others, indicating the statements measure a "theological package" of evangelical belief, Stetzer said.

"This simple set of four questions reliably discerns those who share evangelical beliefs from those who do not," Stetzer said.

In a phone survey of 1,000 Americans, LifeWay Research found widespread agreement with traditional evangelical beliefs.

Fifty-two percent strongly agree the Bible is their highest authority, and 58% strongly agree Jesus' death is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of sin. Almost as many strongly agree it is important for them to personally encourage non-Christians to trust Christ (49%) and

only those who trust solely in Jesus will be saved (48%).

"The biggest challenge in defining evangelicals is that too many people want to affirm evangelical beliefs, to the point you can end up with an unrealistic percentage. No one thinks the majority of Americans are evangelicals," Stetzer said.

About three in 10 Americans fit the NAE/LifeWay Research statistical definition of what would count as evangelical by belief. That number will move a bit due to the format of the questionnaire and the margin of error, but it also aligns with other studies using other methods, Stetzer said.

For example, 35% of Americans describe themselves as "born again or evangelical Christian," according to Pew Research's 2014 U.S. Religious Landscape Study, and 25% identify with evangelical churches.

LifeWay Research found overlap but not perfect correlation among those who label themselves evangelicals, those who attend evangelical churches, and those who hold evangelical beliefs. Just 59% of Protestants who identify themselves as evangelicals strongly agree with all four statements.

"Identity, belief, and behavior are three different things when it comes to being an evangelical," McConnell said. "Some people are living out the evangelical school of thought but may not embrace the label, and the opposite is also true."

Differences were particularly apparent among African Americans. Only 25% of African Americans who hold evangelical beliefs consider themselves evangelical Christians, compared to 62% of whites and 79% of Hispanics.

"African American Christians historically have high levels of beliefs that align with evangelical beliefs, but tend not to use that term," Stetzer said.

"A percentage of people strongly agree with all four of these statements but don't identify as Christian, which is fascinating," he said. "Those are some profoundly Christian beliefs."

Researchers can combine the NAE/LifeWay Research statements of evangelical belief with additional questions measuring evangelical belonging and behavior to get a more complete picture of evangelicalism in America, McConnell said.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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# NOBTS offers 2016 classes at Jackson Center

## NEW ORLEANS (Special)

— New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) will be offering undergraduate seminary classes for Spring 2016 through the Leavell College Jackson Extension Center, which meets at Broadmoor Church in Madison. The following classes, with instructors listed, will meet on Mondays starting January 25:

■ 9-10 a.m. Personal Spiritual Disciplines (CMCM 1110-20). One hour credit. John Pace, pastor of First Church, Terry.

■ 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Christian Doctrine (THCM 2300-20). Three hours credit. John Pace.

■ 1-4 p.m. Preaching from Isaiah and Micah (WPUS 3377-20). Three hours credit. Ben Hutchinson, student pastor at Wynnale Church, Terry.

■ 4-7 p.m. Building Healthy Church Relationships (CMCM 3350-20). Three hours credit. Matt Buckles, senior pastor at First Church, Vicksburg.

Through this extension program, NOBTS offers accredited,

affordable theological training that allows students access to high quality seminary education without relocating. Through the Jackson Extension Center, students can pursue and obtain an Associate in Christian Ministry Degree and/or a Bachelor's Degree.

NOBTS offers classes in a variety of formats that allows students to cater their schedule to meet their needs. Students can combine classes at the extension center with online classes,

workshops, conference-based courses, and hybrid courses to obtain the requirements needed for their degree.

To see the cycle of classes offered, as well as other important information about the extension center, visit [nobts.edu/Extensions/LAMSCenters/Jackson1.html](http://nobts.edu/Extensions/LAMSCenters/Jackson1.html).

For more information or to start the application and enrollment process, contact John Pace, Jackson Extension Center director, at (601) 559-

9352 (cell), or (601) 878-5735 (church). E-mail: [thepacepack@aol.com](mailto:thepacepack@aol.com). Norris Grubbs, regional dean for Louisiana and Mississippi, can be contacted at (800) NOBTS-01, ext. 3301, or email [lmextasst@nobts.edu](mailto:lmextasst@nobts.edu).

For prospective students who have not begun the application and enrollment process, visit [nobts.edu](http://nobts.edu), click on "Apply," click on "Undergraduate Applications," and then click "Undergraduate Degree."

## WMU assists Syrian refugees

### BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)

— The Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Foundation is working with Arab Woman Today Ministries (AWT) to help Syrian refugees currently living in Jordan.

The number of refugees fleeing to Jordan has significantly increased in recent weeks. The Jordanian government reports there are 1.5 million Syrian refugees currently living in Jordan, but only a small percentage resides in official refugee camps.

Those who live outside of the camps are not eligible to receive food or other assistance from the Jordanian government.

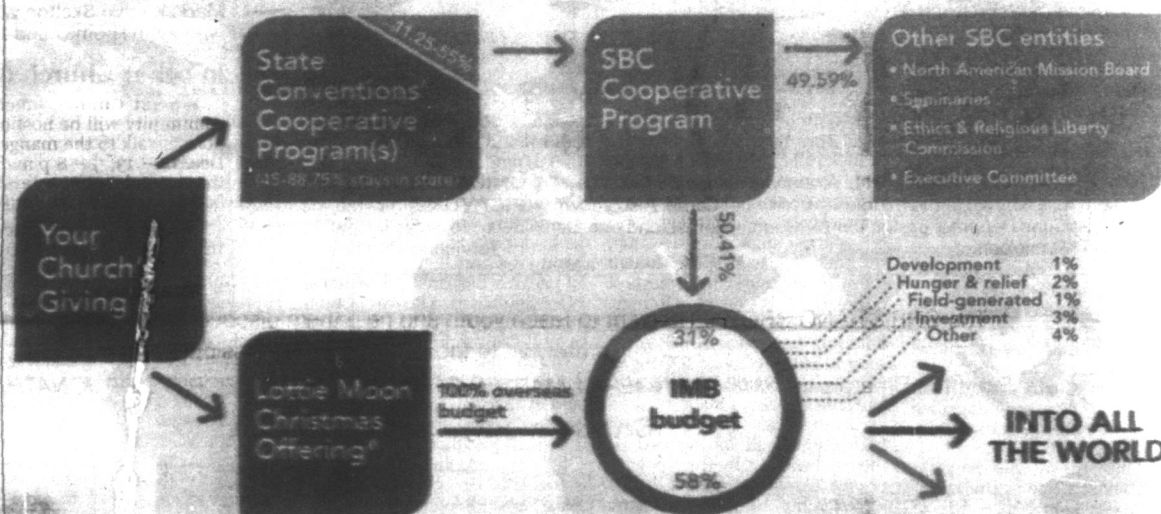
"Because of the increase in the number of refugees from Syria, we are seeing many families who are not being taken care of and have nowhere to turn," says Ruba Abbassi, AWT founder and director. "They need food, blankets and basic necessities."

The WMU Foundation has a long history of working with AWT. "AWT is a trusted ministry partner," said David George, president of the WMU Foundation. "They have been sharing Christ's love in the Arab world for many years, and this is an incredible opportunity to help these vulnerable families."

"The news media has recently picked up on the Syrian refugee issue, but AWT has been addressing this in Jordan for well over a year."

The WMU Foundation is asking people to provide a blanket for \$25, a heater for \$50, or a month's worth of food for a family for \$100. Gifts can be directed to the WMU Foundation AWT Fund, 100 Missionary Ridge, Birmingham, AL 35242. Learn more by visiting [wmufoundation.com](http://wmufoundation.com).

## GIVING TO SEND MISSIONARIES



Percentages above reflect January-February 2015 reports. Learn more about how Southern Baptists partner with their associations, states and SBC to give through the Cooperative Program at [imb.org/give](http://imb.org/give).

## YOUTH

cont. from p. 1

energetic could easily become a tiring task for a couple in their 60s. Yet for the Daggetts, it's like getting their "second wind," Dave said.

Financial gifts through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and Cooperative Program help make it possible for the Daggetts to serve in the Philippines and host weekly training sessions and Bible studies that equip youth to lead their churches and to train others to lead.

"Berlyn, you want to come up now?" Dave asked as he

handed over the microphone so she could lead worship during a Saturday evening training session with leaders from her church and the second-generation church.

That's how it usually goes for these self-proclaimed "shadow missionaries" who push forward their young Filipino leaders. "If we want to reach Filipinos, what better way than with other Filipinos? We can't do it all," Dave said.

Serving with the Daggetts in ministries such as medical and dental clinics, anti-smoking and dental hygiene seminars, and True Love Waits seminars is a perfect opportunity for "on-the-job training," as Berlyn likes to call it.

"Berlyn, what's your favorite story from the Bible?" Dave asked once while traveling with her and several of her cousins to an outreach event. The story of Adam and Eve, she told him.

"OK, you will tell the story today in front of these people," Berlyn recalled Dave's response.

"He's always telling us, 'Don't forget the two P's — passion and practice. Always be passionate and always practice [sharing testimony and Bible stories] so people will be amazed that the Lord is working in your life.'"

Passion to see the Gospel change lives is what drives this couple who rarely seem to take a breather as they go from one training session, outreach

event, or discipleship meeting to the next. "We rarely travel alone," Dave said as he headed out the door and Filipino believers packed into the back of his car so they could help lead a True Love Waits seminar.

The Daggetts didn't expect children and teenagers like Berlyn to be the catalysts in helping move ministry from zero to church multiplication, but they've learned to embrace every opportunity God gives.

"It's a surprise a minute," Dave said. "This can only happen because of God."

**Editor's note:** Find resources for churches at [imb.org](http://imb.org) to learn more about and promote the Lottie Moon Offering.



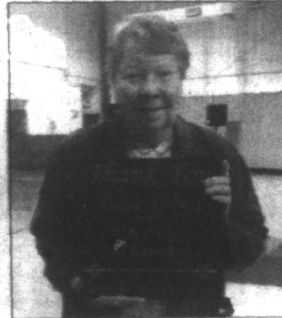
## Just for the Record



**WEST HEIGHTS CHURCH, PONTOTOC**, recognized 21 Sunday School members for perfect attendance in 2014 - 15. Dan Young, far right, is minister of education.



**OAKDALE CHURCH, BRANDON**, recently ordained Ed Deupree as a deacon. He is shown in the middle with his wife, Carrie. Also shown are his father, Chris Deupree, pastor, Temple Church, Forest, and minister of students Ty Danielson.



**UNION CHURCH, PICAYUNE**, recently honored Betty Jo Seals for her 25 years of service as WMU director.



**SPRING HILL CHURCH, WATERFORD**, held a baby dedication. Shown are Callie and Adam Shaffer with Mack, Kaitlyn Skelton with Khloe, and Melissa Skelton with John Thomas and Lane.

### In other Church News:

➤ **First Church, Inverness**, and other churches in the community will be hosting their second annual Follow the Star, a walk to the manger Christmas program with music, Dec. 12 - 13, 5 - 8 p.m. The live reenactment is told from the viewpoint of Mary and her mother, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Joseph, and the innkeeper and his wife.

➤ **Utica Church, Utica**, is presenting a nine scene drive through living Nativity Dec. 11 - 12, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Free.

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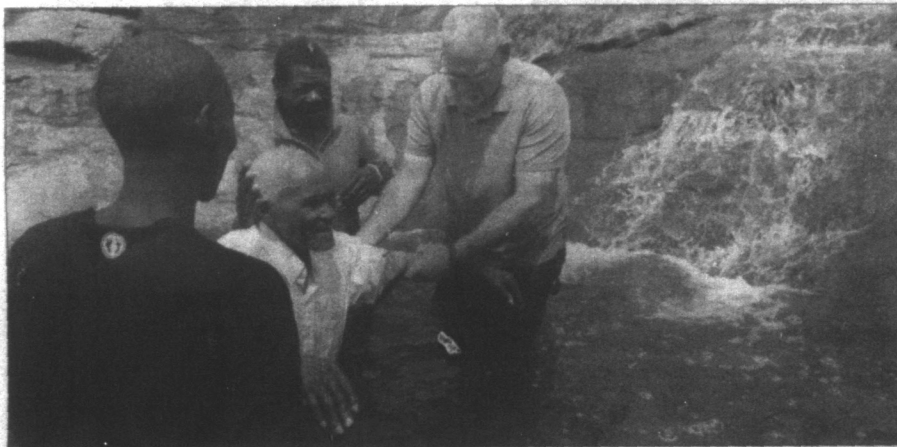
The issues presented in this movie apply to all athletes and all sports! It shares insight on four different life lessons for Teens and two for Parents. It also presents a principle for Coaches that could change the way they lead their teams.

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Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor 10:31)



**FRIENDS LIKE THIS** — After a mile-long hike over steep terrain, International Mission Board missionary Jim Flora (right) assists local pastors as they baptize an 87-year-old believer they call "King George." When the hike became too hard for George, friends carried him on their backs to the mountain river so his baptism could take place. (BP)

## Southern Africa ministry a complete family affair

**LESOTHO (BP)** — When Jim and Teresa Flora think about their ministry in the mountains of southern Africa, they quickly think of how their children are involved. While the Floras rely on the prayers and encouragement of their three grown sons and their families in the U.S., daughters Gracie, age 17; Anna, age 16; and Rebekah, age 11, are part of each day's work.

"We view our ministry as a complete family job," says Teresa, who was called to missions as a child in Girls in Action.

On a typical Saturday when the family heads into a rural village in the country of Lesotho, Gracie reviews the Bible story she will teach, Anna makes sandwiches with the bread she baked Friday night, and Rebekah prepares for the games she will play with children. When they arrive, the daughters engage the children while Jim greets a young pastor and Teresa, a registered nurse, checks on several villagers who have been sick.

As worship begins, the family joins the crowd sitting on the ground as Basotho children shove to sit in their laps. When it's the daughters' turn to teach a Bible story, they stand before the crowd with confidence to share God's Word.

"They have some of their own ministries," Jim says of the uniqueness in his daughters in using their gifts, like Gracie who took the initiative to learn and then teach simple sign language to the church family of a deaf girl.

They do some discipling with teenage girls, they do storying in the village, and they do a lot of baby holding and playing games," Jim says of Gracie, who was adopted from India, and Rebekah, adopted as a baby from Haiti along with her biological sister Anna.

The daughters also are helpful when church teams come from the

U.S. The logistics of hosting short-term groups is extensive, but Jim and Teresa say that they couldn't reach these mountains for Christ without the support. The Floras are from Hamlin Memorial Church in Springfield, Mo.

The girls' faces light up as they greet volunteers and spend the days beside them in ministry — assisting in medical clinics, serving as guides in the villages, and helping their new friends from the States navigate Lesotho's harsh living conditions.

Some days, that means helping set up tents to camp in remote villages or encouraging a reluctant volunteer to ride a horse up a steep mountain trail. "We want to model for them doing things that you think you can't do," their mom says, "stretching yourself, being in the uncomfortable places and letting God bail you out. We want to encourage them to see God working that way in their lives."

Lesotho just might be the perfect place for Jim and Teresa to teach such lessons to their daughters. The family lives four hours from the nearest grocery store. Trips to a city for supplies take all day, or sometimes several days if they get stopped at the border between Lesotho and South Africa.

Roads are often flooded and some villages become inaccessible. Visiting rural villages means hauling camping equipment to stay the night.

Teresa has held babies as they took their last breath, and the whole Flora family has grieved the loss of friends. Starving children continue to break their hearts. Violence against women is a constant concern. Teresa confesses that a few moments have led her to say, "Lord, can we keep doing this?"

Yet the Lord continues to sustain them and renew their call, Jim

says. "We understand that time is short" in a nation with one of the world's highest HIV and AIDS rates, Jim says. "[There] are people that we share the Gospel with from day to day that will not be here next year, so we work hard to be good stewards of the Lord's time that He has given us on this earth because we do believe that it's unacceptable that there are people who have not heard the story of Jesus."

Jim and Teresa both confess the hardest part of living in Lesotho is being far from family in the U.S. which now includes six grandchildren, but neither feels reservations about raising their daughters in a remote part of Africa.

They are careful in their daily life but they do not live in fear. They say their faith is strong, that they are exactly where God intends for them to be, and they know their daughters are part of God's plan.

"God gave them to us for a purpose, and we believe that part of that purpose is reaching the nations," Jim says. For their family, going was the only option. "Our prayer is this, that we could teach them more by going than we could ever teach them by staying," he says.

The Floras give thanks to God for Southern Baptists' faithful giving to the yearly Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the year-round Cooperative Program, as well as the continued prayers of hundreds of churches. They also want to encourage more churches to send out missionaries and teams to join in the work.

**Editor's Note:** Find resources for churches at [imb.org](http://imb.org) to learn more about and promote the Lottie Moon offering. For a related video titled, *Africa: Sending the Gospel to Lesotho*, visit [vimeo.com/139493754](http://vimeo.com/139493754).

## Terrorist groups vie for deaths title

**NASHVILLE (BP and local reports)** — Boko Haram has become the most deadly terrorist group in the world, killing more people in terrorist attacks in 2014 than ISIS, according to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index.

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) is designed to measure the impact of terrorism over 10-year periods, drawing on information compiled by terrorism-tracking organizations that utilize authoritative databases managed by the University of Maryland. The 2015 edition is the first GTI report released since 2012.

The GTI attributed more than 6,644 deaths to Boko Haram in 2014, with most attacks occurring in northeastern Nigeria. ISIS killed 6,073 in terrorist attacks in the same year, according to the report.

The GTI noted a 317% increase of terrorism deaths in Nigeria, the largest increase ever recorded by any country, where newly elected president Muhammadu Buhari has vowed to contain Boko Haram by the end of this year.

Boko Haram has countered Buhari's efforts by concentrating on suicide bomb attacks, Baptist Press has reported, as opposed to the capture of entire villages, a tactic the group had used while Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan was in office.

Terrorism in Nigeria has increased not only at the hands of Boko Haram but also because of a militant group of Fulani herdsmen, which the GTI blamed for 1,229 deaths in 2014.

While Boko Haram and ISIS have largely attacked Christians and other religious groups, the number of religious figures and worshippers killed in terrorism attacks decreased by 11% in 2014, according to the GTI, but the decrease in religious victims was offset by a 172% increase in the deaths of private citizens.

Unlike Boko Haram, ISIS does not limit its attacks to terrorism strikes, the index

noted, because ISIS is also involved in the Syrian civil war. As such, ISIS engages in combat with forces loyal to Assad, the al-Nusra front, Kurdish forces, and the international coalition against ISIS. The deaths attributed to ISIS in combat — at least 20,000 — are not included in the terrorism count.

The GTI was released just as ISIS captured the world's attention by killing at least 130 people and injuring more than 300 others in a string of attacks in Paris Nov. 13, and claiming credit for a bomb that brought down a Russian jet Oct. 31 over Egypt, killing all 224 aboard.

In addition, the U.S. State Department is considering declaring ISIS guilty of genocide in the group's attacks on the Yazidi sect in Iraq.

Worldwide, the total number of deaths from terrorism increased by 80% in 2014 over the previous year, the GTI found, marking the largest annual increase in the last 15 years. Not only that, but deaths from terrorism have risen 900% in the 21st century, from 3,329 in 2000 to 32,658 in 2014, according to the index.

Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria were listed as the countries suffering the most attacks of terrorism in 2014, accounting for 78% of terrorism deaths, with the bulk occurring in Syria, Iraq, and Nigeria. Terrorism is spreading to other countries, the report found, with the number of countries suffering more than 500 deaths increasing from five to 11.

Somalia, Ukraine, Yemen, Central African Republic, South Sudan, and Cameroon suffered more than 500 terrorism deaths for the first time, the report said.

The GTI relies heavily on the Global Terrorism Database, which the report describes as the most comprehensive dataset on terrorist activity globally.

### Among the GTI's other findings:

■ Iraq and Syria continued to recruit fighters from foreign countries, totaling as many as 30,000 foreigners since 2011 and including 7,000 in the first six months of 2015.

■ The major perpetrators of terrorism in the West are independent, lone-wolf attackers, accounting for 70% of such incidents.

■ The economic cost of terrorism increased by 61% in 2014 over 2013, totaling \$52.9 billion — a 1000% cent increase over 2000.

■ The cost of containing global terrorism is \$117 billion.

■ Terrorism mostly occurs in countries involved in violent conflicts. These countries suffered 88% of all terrorist attacks in the last 25 years.



EGJ ZGO VG TGYSO WPS LGJTO, WPRW

PS ZRYS PAV GHTQ XSZGWWSH VGH,

WPRW LPGVGSYSJ XSTASYSWP AH PAF

VPGKTO HGW USJAVP, XKW PRYS SYS-

JTRVWAHZ TAES.

BGPH WPJSS: VAMWSSH

Clue: Z = G

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 21:28

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

# Texas church sends special gift for international missions

**SULPHUR SPRINGS, Texas (BP)** — A small church in east Texas has made a sacrificial gift to the International Mission Board (IMB), even though doing so meant donating funds that could have been used for a permanent building.

Two years ago, Journey Church sold its building, a facility that was poorly located, with little parking and no room for growth. A purchase of 10 acres as a future building site followed, but constructing a new facility proved cost prohibitive. Church leaders were content to meet in temporary facilities until they were able to complete the project.

Upon hearing of the IMB's 2015 decision to reduce the numbers of staff and missionaries on the field, Journey church members set aside nearly a month in earnest prayer to decide how they could help, pastor Kyle Ray said.

"Our prayer focus was based on three truths or promises: (1) If we truly seek first God's kingdom, not our own, then He will take care of all these other things. (2) Are we going to believe it is better to give than receive? (3) Will we love our neighbors more than ourselves?" Ray said.

"During our season of prayer, a local man desiring to build a Christian ministry around Sulphur Springs contacted us about our using that ministry's building, [which is] expected to be completed within 18 months," Ray said. Information about the man's unsolicited offer was presented to the congregation at a meeting held in early October to determine the church's response to the IMB funding issues.

The congregation of about 60 members voted to give all of a special reserve fund — monies saved over and above operating funds



**MISSIONS MINDED** — Members of Journey Church in Sulphur Springs, Texas, worship together in a local hotel conference room, where they have been meeting since selling their property and giving more than \$29,000 to the International Mission Board. (BP photo courtesy of Journey Church)

— to IMB. The sum amounted to more than \$29,000.

Additionally, the church increased its Cooperative Program giving from seven percent to 10% next year, with a commitment to increase it by one percent each year after that until they get to 15%.

While waiting on the new facility to become available, the church planned to continue meeting at a local hotel, but Ray said the church discovered a better option. "That week we were contacted by the pastor of First Baptist Church of Sulphur Springs who asked us, out of the blue, if we would be interested in meeting on Sunday mornings in that church's Recreation Outreach Center (ROC) facility."

The move to the ROC facility will save Journey Church a significant amount each month, and the building will be available to use until they move to their more permanent location.

"As we prayed about giving more to IMB, the Lord has seemingly convinced our church family that we don't need to spend \$500,000 on a building when we

can get along fine without one. He will take care of us and has proven to do so by providing two meeting locations (one temporary and one for more long-term use) for way less than we are paying now, and way less than a mortgage plus expenses would be to own a building," Ray said.

"It has been humbling to see God do so much."

Journey church became a Southern Baptists of Texas Convention church plant four years ago and called Ray to become its senior pastor in January 2012. From the beginning, the church has embraced international missions, particularly among unreached people groups.

"Within six months of beginning our work together, we went on our first international trip... to work with an unreached people group," Ray said. "We adopted that group and have since been back seven times, working with an IMB [worker] there."

From fewer than 20 believers, the missions area where the church is partnering now has more than 200 believers and five churches.

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**

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(601) 922-2242

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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

WE WISH YOU A VERY

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND  
HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Baptist Children's Village residents, staff and board of trustees wish you and yours a very special Christmas and a happy, healthy and hope filled New Year.

BAPTIST CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

NOVEMBER 1-15, 2015

### MEMORIALS

Johnnie Parkerson  
Mrs. Tolitha Stanford  
Joe and Lorraine Pigott  
Mrs. Marilyn W. Brady  
Miss Karen Pittman  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion  
Bobby Reed  
MS DOT Enforcement Division  
Wayne "Tub" Reeves  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Cecil Vernon Robertson  
Mr. David V. Robertson  
Imogene Rogers  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Betts  
Halidean Russell  
Mrs. Tolitha Stanford  
Mr. Ray Rutledge  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Otho Steve Sanders  
Mrs. Sheila Huffman  
Rev. Jerry E. Slonaker  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Clopton  
Christine Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Mr. E. Wayne Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Lavelle Massey  
Freddie Jean Ashley Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Eddie Speights  
Kandy Smith  
Daniel, Dianne & Alissa Smith  
Pat Smith  
Mrs. Marilyn W. Brady  
Dink Spraberry  
Mrs. Ruby C. Jones  
Delton Spring  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy R. Havard  
Jerry C. Stone  
Mrs. Jeannine J. Stone  
Janet Sullivan  
Mr. & Mrs. Reece Douglas, Jr.  
Keith Sumrall  
Mrs. Pam Simmons  
Mrs. Marie Tate  
Phil, Dot & June Shepard  
Mrs. Inez Tipton  
Pheba BC  
Dr. Bobby Townes  
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Gore, III  
Mrs. Mary Turner  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Christine Wallace  
Bonnie, Luke and Mandy  
Daughdrill  
Louis H. Walton Sr.  
Andy & Carrie Oakes  
Mr. Elmo Wheat  
Daniel, Dianne & Alissa Smith  
Mrs. Barbara Wheelless  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Miss Jenise White  
Mr. & Mrs. Lavelle Massey  
Robert Willingham  
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Palmer  
Mrs. Evelyn Willis  
Valley Park BC  
Robert B. Woods  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Tillman  
Thelma Ruth Woodyear  
Mike, Janis & Ben Goff  
Mrs. Thelma Ruth Woodyear  
Mr. & Mrs. Gregg T. Tindle  
Mr. & Mrs. Percy J. Peeler  
Ms. Lucy L. Campbell

NOVEMBER 16-30, 2015

### HONORS

Marilyn Brady  
Ms. Emily A. Carlisle  
Mrs. Bridgette L. Davis  
Mr. Tom Davis  
Dr. & Mrs. John Douglas  
Dr. & Mrs. Jay Douglas  
Mrs. Yvonne Evans  
Mr. & Mrs. Kerby A. Evans

Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Graham  
Ms. Betty Rhines  
Mr. David Haworth  
Adult SS Dept 7B, FBC  
Vicksburg  
Jim and Tommie Mayo  
Mrs. Robert F. Neely, Jr.  
Dr. & Mrs. Ken McRaney  
Ms. Betty Rhines  
Robbie Parish  
Ms. Edith M. Strickland  
Archie Rose Pierce  
Cindy Coates  
Sherry Fortenberry  
Diane Daughdrill  
Mr. & Mrs. Branton Riley  
Ms. Betty Rhines  
Renea Setser  
Mr. & Mrs. Lamar Gordon  
Mr. & Mrs. Johnny Yates  
Ms. Betty Rhines

NOVEMBER 16-30, 2015

### MEMORIALS

Ms. Audell Ammons  
Mr. & Mrs. Louis J. Dugas  
Willie Anthony  
Mrs. Billie Lynn Arthur  
William Bales  
Mr. & Mrs. Rex Cowart  
Frankie Beck  
Temple BC  
Don Brady  
Ms. Tina G. Roberts  
Willie Mae Brister  
Adult 7 SSC, FBC McComb  
Mrs. Doris D. Burtchett  
Tuscola BC  
Howard Camp  
Billy Anders' SSC, Galilee BC,  
Gloster  
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Mac Campbell  
Mr. John M. Campbell  
Donna Cochran  
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Mrs. Louise Gammill  
Mr. & Mrs. E. C. Parsons  
Merle Graham  
Mrs. Billie Lynn Arthur  
Mr. Ben F. Griffin  
Charles & Gail Davis  
Mrs. Elizabeth Hand  
Mr. & Mrs. Albert R. Dulaney  
Bobby Gene Harrington  
Jim & Bebe Harrington &  
Family  
June Harris  
Mr. Charles W. Holmes  
Mike E. Hines  
Mrs. Michelle Alt  
Mr. William "Bill" Hodges  
Dorcas-Ruth SSC, Bogue  
Chitto BC  
Leone P. Howard  
Mike and Arita Davis  
Donna Vaughn James  
Ms. Peggy S. Higginbotham  
Jan Jayroe  
Mrs. Sara C. Chilton  
Mrs. Doris Jones  
Mr. & Mrs. Rex Cowart  
Mrs. Sadie Langford  
Mr. & Mrs. Kerby A. Evans  
Mrs. Catherine (Kitty) Lee  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bryan  
Meridith Lee  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy G. Hastings  
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Mr. & Mrs. Carl R. Woolery  
Jeanette Mars  
Anita and Mike Davis  
Cliff Mayfield  
Mrs. Billie Lynn Arthur  
Kendall McPhail  
Bonnie, Luke & Mandy  
Daughdrill  
Mr. Loyd E. Nations  
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Lowery  
Will O'Reilly  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Bruton  
Mr. James Owen  
Juniper Grove BC, Ruth SSC  
Mrs. Jo Ann Lindsey Owens  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bryan

Judge Joe Pigott  
Mr. & Mrs. Ron D. Craddock  
Mrs. June Rials  
Mrs. Martha Ann May Klaus  
Keith Rials  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Mangold  
Cecil Vernon Robertson  
Mr. David V. Robertson  
Virginia Roussel  
Adult 7 SSC, FBC, McComb  
ECHO SS, FBC McComb  
Young at Heart Singers, FBC  
McComb  
Doris E. Saksa  
Arlington Heights BC  
Mr. W. C. Sumrall  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry D. Arrington  
Ms. Katherine Sykes  
Mr. & Mrs. James L. Robertson  
Pat Clark  
Mr. Bob Taylor  
Mr. & Mrs. Burl Barbour  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Dale  
Mr. Wayne Walley Truitt  
Mr. & Mrs. David Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. R. N. Humphreys  
Westmoreland Dermatology  
Mr. & Mrs. John Jordan  
Robert Vinson  
Mr. C. Marc McArthur  
Melvin Wade  
Mr. & Mrs. Carl R. Woolery  
Christine Wallace  
Bonnie, Luke & Mandy  
Daughdrill  
Elaine Wheat  
Daniel, Dianne & Alissa Smith  
Ms. Lezlie Whitehead  
Mr. & Mrs. Walker Williamson  
Ms. Mallory Williams  
Mr. & Mrs. Walker Williamson  
Patricia Williamson  
Faithful Workers SSC, Salem  
BC  
Mrs. Louise Wilson  
Arlington Heights BC  
Mr. Wiley Wilson  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas L. Johnson  
Neil Wrenn  
Faith BC

## BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at [ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com) or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).



## The King Arrives • Matthew 1:18-25

### Merry CHRISTmas!

Let's explore the depth of this traditional greeting. Matthew 1:18 begins, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:" Matthew 1:18a (KJV). A very good way to begin to enrich our appreciation for the spiritual significance is simply to read carefully Matthew's account in Matthew 1:18-25. Another good idea would be to read it first in the translation you are most familiar with and then reread it in another English translation (or if another language is meaningful to you then read it in that language).

Another beautiful Gospel account is found in Luke 2:1-20. "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn," Luke 2:7 (KJV). One way to help young children identify with the biblical story of CHRISTmas is to secure a "manger scene" with unbreakable figures for at least Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus with a manger. Interest will grow as you add some unbreakable animals such as sheep, a cow, and a donkey. As the child shows interest in your manger scene join them and talk about the CHRISTmas story. This will allow you to tell the story of Jesus' birth over and over again during the CHRISTmas season.

Many of you are reading this lesson preview because you have the God-given privilege of teaching adults the Bible. Building on the childlike excitement of celebrating Jesus' birthday, let's work for a maturing understanding of this story. Matthew 1:18 says more than what is quoted in the first paragraph of this lesson preview. Matthew 1:18 (KJV) says, "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to

Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

Verses 22 and 23 explain the deeper meaning of the phrase "she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us," Matthew 1:22-23 (KJV). The angel of the Lord

was quoting the Prophet Isaiah who said in the eighth century BC "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel," Isaiah 7:14 (NIV). Those who have trouble accepting this truth of God's Word that a virgin gave birth to a baby, look for other explanations. Some scholarly skeptics claim that virgin in the Isaiah prophecy could just mean a young woman.

So I sought out a bonafide Hebrew scholar, Dr. Wayne VanHorn, from Mississippi College.

Dr. VanHorn, explained that the Hebrew word "almah can at times refer to a young single woman or a young woman recently married. But he also pointed out we should not ignore the fact that Jews had strict laws requiring a woman to be a virgin at marriage. Dr. VanHorn's first answer to my inquiry about the Hebrew word translated

virgin in Isaiah 7:14 was more helpful to me. November 23, 2015 he texted, "The Septuagint (Greek OT) has the word parthenos=virgin. The Hebrew Bible has 'almah=young woman of marriageable age and presumed a virgin. So virgin is a good translation."

Actually to understand the conversation between the angel of the Lord and Joseph who was engaged to Mary, it will be more help to watch Joseph's understanding and actions. When Joseph discovered Mary was pregnant, he assumed she had been unfaithful to him since he knew that he had not had sexual intercourse with her and could not be the father of this baby. Matthew tells us that Joseph was a just man and he did not want to embarrass Mary or even endanger her by publicly exposing her or publicly divorcing her.

God sent a message to Joseph, "saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins," Matthew 1:20-21 (KJV).

Hicks is associational missions director for Jasper Association in Bay Springs.



### Explore the Bible

with Don Hicks

## Freed by God's Forgiveness • John 8:2-11

Scripture teaches that God perfectly embodies both mercy and justice, and this is clearly demonstrated in the life of Jesus. John 8:2-11 is an example in which we see Jesus acknowledging that sin results in punishment and death while also extending mercy and hope. After retreating for the evening to the Mount of Olives, Jesus returned to the city early in the morning. He sat down in the temple and taught the people who had gathered to hear him.

Once again, the religious leaders sought to ensnare Jesus in a trap. They brought before him a woman accused of committing adultery. One can imagine the group of Pharisees and scribes, putting on a face of religious zeal and indignation at sin, shoving through the crowds and forcing the woman to the center of the room. Addressing Jesus as "Teacher," they proclaimed that the woman had "been caught in adultery, in the very act," (John 8:4 NASB) which is particularly interesting in light of the fact that they did not bring in the man, as well. They continued, "Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do you say?" (John 8:5 NASB)

The command being referred to could be that which is found in Leviticus 20:10 or Deuteronomy 22:22-24,

where death is the sentence for those found guilty of adultery. The religious leaders' question may seem innocent enough on the surface, but with a little further study their true intent can be seen. Rather than taking the woman to an actual trial as would be supposed of those who were truly seeking justice, they brought her to Jesus and sought to force him to assume the role of judge.

Whether Jesus responded in favor or opposition to stoning the woman, they believed they could trap him in his words. Had he replied that yes, she should be stoned, they could claim that Jesus was assuming authority that did not belong to him. Only Rome had the power to ultimately sentence anyone to death. However, to say that she was not to be put to death would have placed him in opposition to the Mosaic Law. Verse six clearly states that they were testing him, hoping

to have a charge that they could use against him.

Jesus, however, saw through their schemes. Rather than respond, he stooped and began writing on the ground with his finger. The religious leaders would not be ignored, and they continued to push Jesus for an answer. His response was surely unexpected. He stood and said, "Let him

who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." (ESV) Some commentators be-

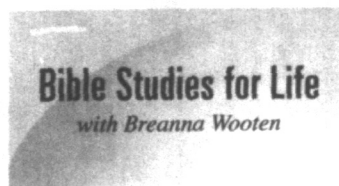
lieve that this was according to Deut. 17:7, where the witnesses were to be the first to take part in putting the guilty to death. In addition, some believe that in the original wording, "him who is without sin" implied that the person doing the punishing should be free of the same or similar sin, not necessarily free from all sin (which would apply only to Jesus).

Jesus resumed writing on the ground. We don't know what Jesus wrote, but we do know that his actions and words had a powerful effect. Each and every accuser, beginning with the oldest, turned and left until only the woman and Jesus remained. "Jesus stood up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.'" (John 8:10-11 NASB)

Jesus did not wink at her sin or tell her to go on living as she was. He addressed the fact that she had, in fact, sinned. However, he said that he did not condemn her to death. He then instructed her to change the way she was living, to turn from her sin.

Each of us, like the woman in this story, is guilty of sin. We deserve death. However, we have a merciful Savior who has taken the wrath of God that our sin deserves on himself. He has redeemed us, and because of his sacrifice and love we have forgiveness of sin and hope of eternal life. He calls us to "go, and from now on sin no more," and by the power of His Spirit enables us live a life of holiness.

Wooten is a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.



### Bible Studies for Life

with Breanna Wooten



# Miss. church commits to long term missions

**OAXACA, Mexico (BP and local reports)** — "Wherever you go, we go." First Church, Oxford, made that commitment to Jeff and Liesa Holeman long before they began serving as International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries in 2008.

It started a decade earlier when Jeff became student minister at the church, which is in the town where the University of Mississippi is located. He led the youth group to make return mission trips to Brazil.

In 2003 during a Sunday morning service at the church, Jeff felt called to overseas missions fulltime. He explains how he decided to declare to his wife Liesa that they were going to be missionaries on the same day she had been home caring for a sick child. "It didn't go well," he said with a smile.

It wasn't that Liesa didn't feel a tug toward missions, but she thought that would be later in life after their children were grown. In the meantime, she thought she would continue to work as a criminal investigator for Mississippi's state tax commission, and the couple would spend their children's formative years doing student ministry together.

It turned out they would, but not how she had thought.

The Holemans stayed in Oxford for the next few years until they took their two children with them on the church's mission trip to Brazil in 2006. The children responded so well that the family then went on a trip to Southeast Asia to help lead activities for the children of missionaries during a retreat.

Talking with the missionary families gave Liesa the reassurance she needed about raising a family on the mission field, and the Holemans were appointed by IMB at the end of 2007.

First Church, Oxford, partnered with the Holemans when they first served in Peru. Then, in the three years since, the Holemans have begun serving as cluster strategy leaders in Oaxaca, Mexico — and First Church has adopted the Tlacolula Valley Zapotec people group in that area.

"They didn't just send us," Jeff said. "They want to be a part."

"We have a huge support group behind us... they don't let go of us," he said. "That's a two-way street. We value our relationship with one another. Just because we're out of sight, we're not out of mind. We know this because of the way they love us."

Earlier this year a mission team from Oxford spent a week alongside Jeff and Liesa, teaching English as a Second Language and leading medical clinics. For some parents on the team, their children had been in Liesa's preschool class at the Oxford church and in the youth group led by Jeff. For others, they had taught



**▲ THE LITTLE ONES** — Some of the youngsters that Southern Baptist missionary Liesa Holeman visits at a Mexican children's home will return home with their families after a couple months of specialized care, so she has learned to take every opportunity to share the love of Jesus with them. (IMB photo)

**▲ HELPING BY TEACHING** — Michael Meurrier (center), a physical therapist from First Church, Oxford, demonstrates the best way to pick up a heavy object to this grandmother who still does backbreaking work on her farm. (IMB photo)

**▼ ON MISSION FIELD** — Ardent Ole Miss fan Jeff Holeman keeps close ties with their home church, First Church, Oxford, where the University of Mississippi is located. The church sends ministry teams to serve with the Holemans in Mexico. (IMB photo)



the Holemans' children in Sunday School.

First Church, Oxford, member Buster Hale had been part of Jeff's first mission trip to Brazil. He's served alongside him on mission trips to both Peru and Mexico. "We've watched Jeff and Liesa grow," he said. "We've been a part of raising them in the Lord."



**▲ HEALING MINISTRY** — After attending to medical needs, Cheryl Cannon (center), a nurse from First Church, Oxford, prays with Alejandro Rodriguez (not his real name) in his home in Benito Juarez, Mexico. (IMB photo)

Jeff and Liesa met while attending Ole Miss and became a part of the Oxford church. "That's who first invested in me — my church," Liesa said. "We want other churches to do the same. ... God called the church to do this and we as missionaries have a responsibility to help our churches touch, feel, and understand our stories... to help

them understand the importance of going to the nations.

"When they sent us, they told us they would come alongside us. It's amazing to see that they sent us, and now they are coming themselves. They invested in me. I want to take the time to invest in others."

Jeff's home church, First Church, Yazoo City, taught him

the value of missions. Church member Gene A. Triggs had served as chairman of trustees at the Foreign Mission Board (now IMB) for four years. Another church member, the late Owen Cooper, served as the last layman president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1973-74.

The church was also home to the late country comedian Jerry Clower for 34 years.

The Holemans mentor dozens of students and young adults from across the U.S. serving in Oaxaca as summer, semester, and two-year missionaries. Many of whom return to the mission field for extended terms of service.

Sarah Toles from The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL, worked with the Holemans for four months as a Hands On missionary in Oaxaca before returning to Birmingham to work as a nurse. This year, she went back to Oaxaca on a short-term mission trip to help medical professionals from First Church, Oxford, conduct medical clinics there.

"They're like family," she said of the Holemans. "They would invite us to their home. They would check in with us to make sure we were connecting not only there but with loved ones back home."

A student minister at heart, Jeff realizes the impact short-term missions can make. "God uses short-term missions to open our minds and hearts about what it means to be available to God and to question, 'Why am I here?' We were created to make Him known. Our role is making His name known around the world. Obedience is asking, 'Where do You want me to go to do that?'"

Nearly every unreached people group in Mexico is represented in the U.S., Jeff said. "My prayer is that U.S. churches become aware that cross-cultural missions isn't just something they can do in other countries. It's something they can do in their own cities, and it will equip these people groups to share the Gospel in their own countries."

Similarly, the Holemans have helped Oaxaca Christians to intensify their missions efforts both in Oaxaca and abroad. Jeff guided Iglesia Biblica Evangelica Lluvias de Gracia in Oaxaca to plan a mission trip to Guatemala.

"I'll get you connected," Jeff told us, said Juanita Perez, a member of the Oaxaca church. "He's just full of resources."

"Oaxaca's been so blessed by missionaries," said Juanita, noting the student teams and missionaries who have served there. "Now, it's our turn to go."

Find resources for churches at [imb.org](http://imb.org) to learn more about and promote the Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions.